



LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

July 13, 2009

**County of Los Angeles**  
**Sheriff's Department Headquarters**  
4700 Ramona Boulevard  
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169



Mr. William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer  
County of Los Angeles  
713 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Mr. Fujioka:

**CENTRAL ARRAIGNMENT COURT**  
**CENTRALIZED ARRAIGNMENT**

On June 10, 2009, you requested the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Department) to provide suggestions on how to improve the efficiency of the court system, specifically as it relates to arraignments of inmates at downtown courts. The Department believes that tremendous benefits could be realized by utilizing the Central Arraignment Court (CAC) more extensively and expanding the hours for arraignments. Please note that the numbers listed in this letter are daily averages as the workload varies from day-to-day.

There are 500 arraignments each day throughout Los Angeles County. Forty percent of those arraignments are conducted at three downtown courts: Criminal Courts Building (CCB), Metro Court, and CAC. Transferring arraignments from CCB to CAC would create several benefits for the criminal justice system.

CCB hears 100 arraignments daily. These cases could be heard during the afternoon session at CAC. This would help relieve prisoner overcrowding at CCB during the critical morning sessions where more than 460 inmates are held in the lockup area on a typical court day.

CAC is located at 429 Bauchet Street, Los Angeles, and is attached to the Men's Central Jail (MCJ) and the Inmate Reception Center (IRC) by two completely enclosed pedestrian passageways. This provides for secure prisoner movement to CAC from MCJ, IRC, and Twin Towers Correctional Facility.

*A Tradition of Service*

Thirty high-security inmates are arraigned each day in various courts throughout Los Angeles County. Whenever this type of inmate is removed from a secure jail environment for movement to court, it impacts security; and because they are traveling to multiple courts, it additionally necessitates a replication of effort. By moving these arraignments to CAC, security costs and concerns could be greatly mitigated because only one court needs to be set-up and the inmate does not leave the jail location with the exception of being walked through a secure corridor. In addition to arraignments, other court proceedings, such as motions or hearings that involve high-security inmates, could potentially be heard at CAC, further mitigating security costs and concerns.

Additional efficiencies could be gained by using CAC for hearings and motions for downtown inmates when they do not involve a jury. This would allow the inmates to remain in a secured setting without the added expense and security concerns of transporting them to other courts. There are 200 cases per day that potentially fall into this category.

The hours of CAC should be extended to allow for a better work flow and more timely arraignments and hearings. By allowing four courts, on two shifts, six days per week, Monday through Saturday, and utilizing designated judges and commissioners with their associated staffs, CAC could prevent heavy caseloads in the beginning of the week and dispose of cases in a more timely and safe manner.

The extended hours of operation and the proximity of the CAC to IRC, the Correctional Treatment Center, and other areas where medically fragile inmates are housed, would be beneficial. The inmate patients could be sent to CAC with minimal impact on their medical treatment, thereby allowing for these individuals to be arraigned rather than being a "medical miss out" for court, which occurs far too often.

The benefits of this concept, which takes advantage of the original intent of co-locating a jail and courthouse, include operational efficiency, reduced costs, assistance in reducing court associated jail overcrowding issues, and enhanced public safety. To these ends, the County should support this concept at CAC and consider expanding it to the Century Regional Detention Center where similar benefits could be realized. Video arraignment continues to move forward and will only be enhanced by the changes suggested in this letter, particularly the extended hours at CAC.

If you have questions concerning this matter, please contact Chief Alexander R. Yim, Correctional Services Division, at (213) 893-5017.

Sincerely,



LEROY D. BACA  
SHERIFF